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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002231

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [EWWT](#) [FR](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PUNTLAND RESPONSE TO A/S FRAZER'S PIRACY LETTER

REF: STATE 93932

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¶1. Post forwarded A/S Frazer's reftel letter urging more be done on piracy to Mohamed Muse Hersi, President of Somalia's semi-autonomous Puntland region. Hersi's response follows in paragraph 3.

¶2. Separately, poloff shared A/S Frazer's letter with Ali Abdi Aware, Puntland's foreign relations minister. Aware affirmed Puntland was doing all it could to counter piracy off its Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden coasts. Not surprisingly, his letter contained an extensive list of equipment and materiel Puntland needs, including six boats, 24 sport utility vehicles, and training and salaries for a 250-man Anti-Piracy Brigade. By our calculations, the latter alone carries a \$4.5 million price tag. Aware praised the September 16 French raid rescuing two French nationals from Somali pirates. Aware said more countries should take direct action against the pirates, rather than pay astronomical ransoms for hijacked ships and crews. Aware pointed out that Puntland had rescued an Indian ship and crew in April, after India had given Puntland permission to interdict. Those captured pirates had been tried and sentenced to life. Aware said his government wants more international coordination on piracy, and said he will be the primary point of contact for future cooperation.

¶3. Begin Text of Letter:

Dear Assistant Secretary,

Thank you for your letter of 9 September 2008 passed on to me by H.E. Ambassador Michael E. Rannenberger. I greatly value your emphasis on the importance of our relationship. Your government's support to Somalia in general and Puntland in particular is very much appreciated. I could not agree more that we need to take action to curb challenges including piracy detrimental to our cooperation.

I am pleased to reconfirm that Puntland State Government remains committed, despite our limited means, to fight piracy in Puntland waters. I expressed my concern in detail on the growing piracy as well as other security and terrorism related issues in my letter of 9 April to the U.S. Government through Ambassadors Rannenberger and Yamamoto, hoping to get early assistance to combat pirates before reaching the current level of madness.

The recurrence of security incidents from the end of last year prompted initiatives taken by the Government in collaboration with the communities and civil society organizations. A new Ministry for Security was instituted in December 2007 with an increased budget allocation for the implementation of rule of law and a senior experienced police general with a proven record appointed as its Minister. A new Police commander and a Deputy Commander were also appointed later as a beginning of first touches of a comprehensive reform of Police Command structure. In line with these changes, a new Puntland Security Policy was drawn and approved by the Cabinet Council in June.

By using three low speed ships and four short scope radars of our own, we have done as much as we could do under circumstances of limited resources and equipment, hunting down the known criminals, arresting nearly 40 of them, wounding some seriously and killing a few in the course of duty. Puntland forces rescued an Indian cargo ship and its crew from pirates last April. Those arrested in that operation are now serving life imprisonment and the other prisoners are awaiting trial. Numerous planned attacks on foreign vessels and boats have also been intercepted, frustrated or thwarted by Puntland security forces. Pirates continue to fight back, buying loyalty and hideouts in major towns, thereby endangering security personnel. However, inland pirate resistance has weakened and poses only occasional desperate threat to the individual security personnel.

As cost increased with the number of continuous security operations carried out over the last 10 months coupled with food price hikes and drought, we have been unable to pay most of the salaries.

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With the help of the international community and the United States, Puntland administration, at best, can take the following actions:

- Placement of a marine force of 35 men in each of six selected coastal settlements: Gara'ad, Eyl, Hafun, Bargal, Alula and Las-Khorei and an additional 40-man mobile rapid deployment unit to deny pirates to launch attacks from the shore since little can be done when a ship is seized at sea;
- Supply of arms to the 250-man Special Task Force against piracy;
- Legislation of an anti-piracy act by the Parliament of Puntland;
- Dissemination of public information brochures through the media explaining how piracy is un-Islamic, un-Somali and a criminal activity in international law; and
- Promotion of community national awareness about the issue of piracy.

This is as far as we can stretch ourselves. Yet, it will not tackle the present piracy problem effectively without external backing, because huge ransoms demanded and paid enabled the pirates to buy faster marine transport and more weapons. I would like therefore to ask your Government and the international community to assist us in the following areas:

- Training of the Special Task Force against piracy;
 - Budget support for the task force for a period of 12 months (\$50 per day X 250 for subsistence, incentives, health, fuel and maintenance);
 - Twenty-two four-wheel drive pick-up vehicles;
 - Supply of six speed boats to cover the 1650 km coastline of Puntland and
- Communication equipment.

Finally Madam, I strongly believe that with your help on an emergency basis we can together defuse the ongoing situation

in Puntland waters starting with a coordinated sea and land attack to free the ten or so ships and their crews now being held. We look forward to hearing from you and the international community at your earliest convenience.

With my highest considerations.

Best Regards,

//signed//

Mohamoud Muse Hersi,
President,
Puntland State Government

End Text.

[14](#). Post will convey Washington's response when available.
RANNEBERGER